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ABSTRACT

More librarians are finding ways to integrate library instruction into existing courses in a manner that makes library resources and the methodology for finding them an essential and basic component of the courses. Course-integrated instruction requires close cooperation between the librarian and the instructor and subject expertise on the part of the librarian. Such cooperation normally grows out of course-related instruction. Whatever the assignment given, its goal should be to introduce students to a wide span of library resources and to make them comfortable in using these sources. Course-integrated instruction permits library research at a deeper level which allows for a more cognitive approach to research methodology. However, this type of library instruction is also time consuming for the librarian involved in the instruction, who may have to meet with the instructor several times and grade the library assignment. Nevertheless, as libraries continue to grow and become more complex, the demands for such instruction will increase, and academic librarians must be prepared to meet them. (9 references) (EW)

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ERIC DIGEST

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Course Integrated Library Instruction

by Joan Ormondroyd

After years of concentrating on graduate programs and research projects, colleges and universities across the country are beginning to respond to public concerns about the quality of *undergraduate* education by reinstating foreign language requirements and core programs in the liberal arts (see issues of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Foreign Language Annals).*

It is not surprising that librarians are also becoming more concerned with the *quality* and *depth* of the instructional programs they are offering students. Traditional programs have included workbooks and credit courses (most often general in scope and not subject related) or course-related, single-session lectures where the content of the library session is related to the subject matter of the course, but where there is generally no further contact with the course until the next semester when the same 50-minute session is presented once more. We are now beginning to see a trend, if not away from these forms of bibliographic instruction, then at least in a direction complementary to them. More and more librarians are finding ways to integrate library instruction into existing courses in a manner that makes library resources and the methodology for finding them an essential and basic component of the course.

As early as 1979 Guskin, Stoffle, and Boise (1979) were advocating a larger teaching role for librarians and suggesting that the direction bibliographic instruction would take into the 1980s would be toward the integration of library instruction into the academic curriculum. In 1983, Constance Mellon wrote that such total integration was indeed desirable, but would be difficult to achieve since "faculty do not view librarianship as an intellectual discipline equivalent to their own. [They] feel that the existing course-related library instruction is sufficient to meet student needs" (Mellon, 1983).

Integrated Instruction

I would like to suggest that the work done by bibliographic instruction librarians over the past 15 years has changed, at least to some extent, the negative image of librarians held by some faculty, and has paved the way for the kind of integrated instruction that is occurring in some academic institutions today. In addition, the advent of database searching, CD ROM players, and online catalogs has caused faculty to turn to librarians for help in greater numbers than ever before. As a result of these factors (and perhaps others as well), faculty are beginning to recognize the expertise of reference librarians and to acknowledge the desirability of working with them as equals. For an instructional program to be truly integrated, such recognition and acknowledgement are essential; we know from long experience that, unless the instructor of a given course cooperates fully with the librarian, any instruction on library use given in that course remains peripheral to it.

Course-integrated library instruction requires that the librarian and the instructor work together closely in planning research assignments and in introducing students to the library. It requires that the research expertise of the librarian be recognized as an important component in completing course assignments. It also requires that the librarian thoroughly understand the goals of the course and that he/she have a basic knowledge of the subject matter. The librarian and the instructor become working partners in preparing the assignment and in working it through with the students. It may also require that the librarian be involved in the evaluation and grading of the papers for the course.

Steps to Take

Course-integrated instruction generally grows out of course-related instruction and develops in those classes where an ongoing relationship has already been established. When the librarian feels comfortable with a course and its instructor, but also feels frustration about the lack of follow-through and depth in the library component of the course, it is his/her responsibility to promote the enhancements that integration can provide. Librarians must not be shy about inviting instructors to talk about these enhancements and the value they can have for the course.

Thought must be given to the kinds of assignments that will be appropriate for the class being taught, but which will also bring students into the library and cause them to use the library's resources in their discipline. Critical, annotated bibliographies are probably the most popular choice, but instructors may be reluctant to follow through with the term paper that should be the outgrowth of such an assignment. Depending on the subject matter of the course, other in-depth assignments might take the form of biographical studies, scientific research, or a comparison or analysis of sources. These assignments might ultimately result in an oral presentation in class or a written essay on a final exam.

Whatever the assignment, its goal should be to introduce students to a wide span of library resources and to make them comfortable in using these sources.

It is easier to evaluate an integrated library program than most other types of library instruction programs since one of the aspects of such a program is the librarian's involvement in the assignment and the grading of that assignment. Faculty are also more willing to participate in the evaluation of the program when they know that the librarian has as much of a stake in the class as they do.

Advantages

Because it is more intense than course-related instruction and involves the student in library research at a much deeper level, course-integrated library instruction allows for a more cognitive approach to research methodology. David Kohl and Lizabeth Wilson, in a study conducted at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, found that students whose intro-

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duction to the libraries was through such an approach did a "statistically significant better job of accessing and using library resources" (Kohl & Wilson, 1986). They also suggest that the more traditional forms of course-related instruction (which they refer to as "the one size fits all" program) pay inadequate attention to the differences in discipline organization and rely too heavily on a basic research strategy that fails to change from one course to the next. By changing that approach and relating the research needs of the class to the way library materials in that discipline are structured, coursework in those classes with which they worked actually improved.

A study at Cornell had similar findings. In one of the courses with which the Undergraduate Library is currently involved in an "integrated" way, the instructor has established that the "average grade for papers was up 1.75 points from previous semesters. There were almost no complaints about grading—something that has been an issue in the past. There were no cases of plagiarism" (Ormondroyd & Parrot, 1988).

In addition to its cognitive advantages, course-integrated instruction mandates that there will always be a library research assignment as part of the course curriculum. Currie, Goettler, and McCaskill have demonstrated that the use of a "compulsory library assignment was vital to maximizing absorption and retention of basic library knowledge" (1982). Yet many instruction librarians have had the experience of having to argue with faculty who assume that general introduction to "how the library works" is going to stick with the unmotivated undergraduate. Once an instructor has been won over to integrating the library instruction into the course, the assignment becomes a given rather than an issue to argue over.

Finally, the librarian who is an integral part of a given course is viewed as a colleague by the instructor of that course and gains stature in the eyes of the students as well.

Disadvantages

As with all programs there are some drawbacks to course-related library instruction. It is, first of all, very time and energy consuming. Any librarian involved in such a course must plan on meeting with the instructor a number of times. He or she will undoubtedly make several appearances before the class during the course of the semester. If the subject area is a fairly new one for the librarian, he/she may find it necessary to sit in on a number of the lectures and to do at least some of the reading for the course.

Colleagues at the reference desk may become resentful when the students in the course ask specifically for the librarian associated with that course. Although this happens in course-related instruction as well, the problem is exacerbated when the librarian-instructor is not only the one who has worked closely with the instructor, but has also created the assignments and is doing the grading. In such a case it may not be appropriate for other librarians to answer students' procedural questions (e.g., when the paper is due, may I have an extension, how long should the annotations be). However, students who actually have subject related questions and could be helped by any of the reference librarians will still ask for the librarian who is named in their syllabus. You may be pulled out of your office time and time again, only to find that what the student needed was to be taught how to use the *Social Science Citation Index* and assumed that only you could teach him.

And finally, the assignment, which is generally seen as an advantage in this form of instructional program, also has the disadvantage of having to be graded by someone. In many cases the instructor is happy to let the librarian do that grading. In very large classes the instructor can sometimes be persuaded to let the librarian teach the teaching assistants how to grade the assignments. In either case, there is a time commitment of some proportion and anyone undertaking an integrated library program must be prepared to make it.

Conclusion

The leaders of the bibliographic instruction movement have long advocated the integration of library instruction into academic courses and many consider it the ideal form of library instruction. Librarians benefit from it in heightened prestige and improved relations with faculty, to say nothing of the value of working with students who understand the research process. Students benefit from the assignments and follow-through connected with such instruction. Although there are drawbacks in the amount of time and energy demanded by such a program, any library that can possibly afford to should develop course-integrated programs. As libraries continue to grow and become more complex, the demands for such instruction will increase and we must be prepared to meet them.

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